

THE CRITIC TALKS TO MUSIC LOVERS

Weekly Comment on Things Musical in Discriminating Philadelphia

THE famous Bach choir, of Bethlehem, which gave the most successful festival in its history last week, is the outcome of an ideal, and like most ideals which are translated into practical form it has had a success which far surpasses the original conception. It is needless to say that this ideal originated with the man who at the start, almost unaided, organized this wonderful choir, Dr. J. Fred Wolfe.

Since his student days Doctor Wolfe has been an admirer and a lover of Sebastian Bach, and he had an unusual opportunity to study his works at the time when he was a pupil of Rheinberger. It was here that he laid the foundation for that further study of the great master which has made him today the foremost Bach expert in the United States, if not in the world.

But it is not alone because he knows Bach that has enabled him to make the Bach Choir what it is today. Doctor Wolfe has the further faculty, not vouchsafed to all great musical students, of imparting his own love and enthusiasm to the members of the choir, and this element is what has given the choir its marvelous success. Of course, the choir has a great leader, and the intricacies of his complex music, but without the enthusiasm and willingness to attend innumerable rehearsals on the part of the members of the singing body even this knowledge, comprehensive as it is, would go for little.

BUT this is by no means all that Doctor Wolfe has imparted to the choir. He has given them another thing which is almost as important in the ultimate result, and that is the deep religious feeling with which the works of the great master must be interpreted.

Bach is essentially a composer of religious music, and still less, unless the singers enter thoroughly into the deeply religious spirit in which the music was composed. It is this element with which Doctor Wolfe has imbued his great choir, and this sincerity plays so small a part in the, at times, overpowering effects that the choir produces.

This is one of the principal features of the annual Bach festivals at Bethlehem. The spirit of the entire gathering and the whole occasion is primarily religious, as it must be to interpret Bach at his best. It is Bach in the spirit as well as in the perfection of performance.

WHAT Doctor Wolfe has done for the music of Sebastian Bach is probably not equaled by any other musician in this country. Not only did he give the first American hearing of the B minor Mass, but the first American performance of the St. John Passion, the Christmas oratorio and a large number of the cantatas.

In passing it may be mentioned that Bach composed more than 300 of these cantatas, there being five sets of them for every Sunday and holy day in the year, besides many single ones and others written for special occasions. About 200 of these are still extant, the others having been lost in one way or another.

These losses are due to the fact that Bach was not appreciated for many years after his death, and it was not until 100 years after the composition of the St. Matthew Passion that it had its first adequate hearing, not actually its first performance in Germany, under Mendelssohn, who did more than any other one man to place Bach's music where its merits entitled it to rank. In the same way two of the five settings of the Passion have been lost, and the greatest of them all, that according to St. Matthew, had an exceedingly narrow escape.

THE story of the rescue of the St. Matthew Passion music is an interesting one. Zelter, the teacher of Mendelssohn, was out walking in Berlin one day, when he noticed an auction sale at the house of a retired chess-player who had acquired wealth shortly before his death.

Out of sheer curiosity, Zelter entered the house and, seeing some music manuscript sticking out of a package apparently of waste paper and other odds and ends, bid for the package and secured it. He took it home and opened it, when the music manuscript proved to be the score of the St. Matthew Passion complete, in Bach's own writing.

Zelter was later persuaded to give the score to Mendelssohn as a Christmas present, and Mendelssohn was thus the first to know its great beauty. He gave it in Germany in 1829, just about one century after it had been composed. So far as is known, this was the first adequate rendition of the mighty work that had ever been given. The original manuscript is still in possession of the Mendelssohn family, which incidentally has innumerable scores of the great master, including most of the great Beethoven quartets and some of the symphonies.

Stories like this, of which there are many and well authenticated, show how little Bach was understood by the musicians of his own time and those who came immediately after him. Within forty years his name had become a mere tradition and it was not until Mendelssohn took the lead that he began to be appreciated.

BUT to return to the Bethlehem Choir. In his wildest dreams Bach probably never thought of such a performance of his works as is now given annually in the Lehigh valley. The size of the chorus for which Bach wrote his cantatas in Leipzig was twelve voices, and these were supplemented by a body of about eighteen instrumentalists. What would he have thought could he have heard his works interpreted last week by a fine orchestra of about seventy skilled instrumentalists and sung by a chorus of more than 200, trained to the acme of perfection, the whole conducted by one of the most loving, conscientious and faithful of his followers?

The immense amount of work and time devoted to the work of the Bach

Choir by Doctor Wolfe is largely a labor of love. His enthusiasm for the music of the great master led him not only to establish the Bethlehem Choir, but also during his years of residence in the West to establish the California Bach Choir, with which he gave two festivals and introduced the music of the great Leipzig Cantor to that section of the country. Such work is bound to bear fruit where it has in Pennsylvania, and that is the chief ambition of Doctor Wolfe—to lead musically inclined persons to know and admire the music of Bach.

AS TO the music itself, the chief feature of it to the musician is its intense modernity. There are dissonances, especially in the vocal parts, which are as daring as those even of Debussy or Ravel, but with this important difference, they are invariably logical. The hearer never feels for a moment that they are introduced simply for the purpose of producing an effect. Always they fit in perfectly with the music, and at that particular point. The compositions are almost always strictly contrapuntal, but the counterpoint is never in evidence to the detriment of the musical quality of the works.

While it cannot be denied that many of the instrumental compositions of Bach now sound somewhat archaic, this is not the case with the vocal works, which sound as fresh and new as though they were composed within the last decade and this is especially true of those in the larger forms. In the smaller works, such as the chorales, which are restricted by the length of the service (they all take about twenty minutes to read) and, by reason of the nature of the service they are all somewhat along the same general lines. But in the mass, or, as it were, the passion music, except those of his own inimitable genius. Here he is at his best, and as a composer of sacred music, both in quality and quantity, he has never been equalled.

Doctor Wolfe has made probably the most profound and exhaustive study of the works of Sebastian Bach of any man in this country. He has studied the tradition of the great composer as well as the actual music, he has given unlimited time and labor to the accomplishment of his ideal, and, as said before, it has doubtless surpassed in achievement his fondest hope of a quarter of a century ago. To paraphrase a Moslem religious saying and a German musical one, "There is but one Bach and Wolfe is his prophet."

JACK INGLIS AT GRAND Havel and Valeska in a Will Cressy Skit Jack Inglis, who is at the Nixon Grand next week, was until recently the vaudeville partner of Jimmy Duffy. Inglis calls his new single a "whizzbang of joy."

O'Brien Havel, assisted by Miss Valeska, comes also to the Grand in "Ticks and Clicks," a sketch by Will H. Cressy. The scene is laid in a stock exchange, and the humor is called of Cressy's best.

Indicted Broker Alleged Bankrupt New York, June 14.—An involuntary petition in bankruptcy was filed yesterday in the United States District Court against a prominent Wall Street broker, who was indicted in connection with his promotion of Range-Burnett oil stocks, and also against his partner, Florine B. Newman. The assets and liabilities of the Newman Company were not given.

'ROOSEVELT DANCES' FOR MEN IN SERVICE

Committee of Women Will Continue Affairs Abandoned by Suffrage Leaders Dances for enlisted men under the name "the Roosevelt dances," in honor of the late Theodore Roosevelt, will be held every Tuesday and Saturday evenings in the ballroom of the Roosevelt, 2027 Chestnut street.

These dances will take the place of those given for two years under the auspices of the Philadelphia county branch of the Woman Suffrage party of Pennsylvania. The following committee will direct the dances: Mrs. Joseph M. Gazzam, Miss Anne Harrod, Miss E. Smiley, Miss Pauline Mitchell, Miss Martha Souder, Miss Margaret Roberts, Mrs. T. H. Spoons and Mrs. A. Foster.

The suffragists were compelled to discontinue the dances conducted under their auspices because of the intensive campaign now on for ratification of the suffrage amendment. A letter has been received by Mrs. E. Q. A. Ellis, secretary of the county suffrage organization, from Mrs. O. F. McCormick, department of clubs of the War Camp Community Service, expressing thanks for entertainment given service men during the last two years.

During that time the suffrage workers entertained 300,000 enlisted men and 200,000 young women and expended \$5000, contributed by the young women for the work.

Mrs. Joseph M. Gazzam, who has been chairman of the dances, started them two years ago and established a precedent by throwing open her own drawing room. Later she transferred the dances to the Woman Suffrage party.

Mrs. George W. Childs Drexel aided the work by giving the use of the Ship and Tent Club. Colonel Duffy helped by giving the use of the Rittenhouse, and the Aldine Hotel management gave the hotel ballroom. Admiral Tappan provided the navy yard band for a time.

The committee consisted of Mrs. Gazzam, Mrs. A. E. Burns, Mrs. Harry

GAYETY 9th BelVine PHILA'S FAMOUS BURLESK THEATRE Oh! Hello Girls! With Billy McIntyre, Joe Perry, Vivian Lawrence, Irene Miller, Billie, Elsie Morrison, Homer Briggs. Wicka Wacka Dancers 48-Runway Beauties—49 Opening Wednesday Night

BALLET Teachers' College of Physical Education, Temple University OPEN AIR Dance Carnival: Burd School 63D AND MARKET STREETS JUNE 14, 3 P. M. TOLL, 50c

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Kohn, Mrs. George A. Dunning, Mrs. George A. Pierson, Mrs. A. Foster, Miss Margaret Roberts, Mrs. I. Eachus, Mrs. Thomas Jones, Mrs. T. H. Spooner, Dr. Marion Frances Self, Mrs. Ralph Raiguel, Miss Anne Harrod, Dr. E. H. Moore, Miss Shedd, Miss Anna McDonald, Mrs. N. A. Stockton, Miss McCausland, Miss Chambers, Miss MacFarland, Mrs. Charles Reinhardt, Miss Hasting, Mrs. Armstrong, Mrs. Godfrey, Mrs. Middleton, Miss Lucy Lewis, Dr. Evelyn Frankouire, Mrs. E. Q. S. Ellis, Mrs. Frank P. DuBois, Miss May Irwin and Miss Alice Claflin.

CHOSE W. C. T. U. OFFICERS Mrs. M. V. Stringer, of Germantown, is Head of Organization At a meeting of the executive board of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, held at the Willard, 1921 Arch street, officers of Philadelphia county and county superintendents of the various departments were chosen.

CHESTNUT ST. OPERA HOUSE BATHING GIRLS IN PERSON Headed ALICE MAISON by Seattle's Film-Comedy "Yankee Doodle" in Berlin! BOTHWELL BROWNE (STAR OF PICTURE) IN PERSON ALSO

FORREST TWICE DAILY MATINEES 2:20 8:20 BIGGEST PICTURE OF THE YEAR AUCTION OF SOULS FROM THE BOOK "PAINTED ARMINIA"



Extra Morning Matinees for Women Only Tuesday and Thursday at 10.15 A. M. MISS EDITH GRAHAM will speak more fully at these Morning Matinees to women only on her two years of captivity in the Slave Markets of the Kurds and Harms of the Turks.

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Table listing various theatres and their current photo plays. Columns include Theatre Name, Address, and Photo Play Title. Theatres listed include Alhambra, Apollo, Arcadia, Belmont, Bluebird, Broadway, Cedar, Colonial, Columbia, Eureka, Grand, Imperial, Jefferson, Liberty, Locust, Lyric, Madison, Market, Metropolitan, New, Park, Rialto, Rivoli, Savoy, Stanley, Victoria, and West Alhambra.

T H E A T R E S OWNED AND MANAGED BY MEMBERS OF THE UNITED EXHIBITORS' ASSOCIATION BELMONT 52D ABOVE MARKET WILLIAM DESMOND IN "THE MINT OF HELL" CEDAR 60TH AND CEDAR AVENUE CHINATOWN'S SPECIAL "THE MIDNIGHT PATROL" COLISEUM MARKET BETWEEN DOROTHY GISH IN "BOOTS" COLONIAL 6TH & MAPLEWOOD AVES. ANITA STEWART IN "FROM HEADQUARTERS" FRANKFORD 4715 FRANKFORD AV. WALLACE REID IN "THE ROARING ROAD" EUREKA 40TH & MARKET STS. MADEIRA KENNEDY IN "DAUGHTER OF MINE" JEFFERSON 5TH & DAUPHIN STS. MARY MAURICE IN "THE MIDNIGHT PATROL" WEST ALHAMBRA 10TH & WALNUT STS. MADEIRA KENNEDY IN "DAUGHTER OF MINE"